British government urged to BAN nitrites amid rising bowel cancer cases

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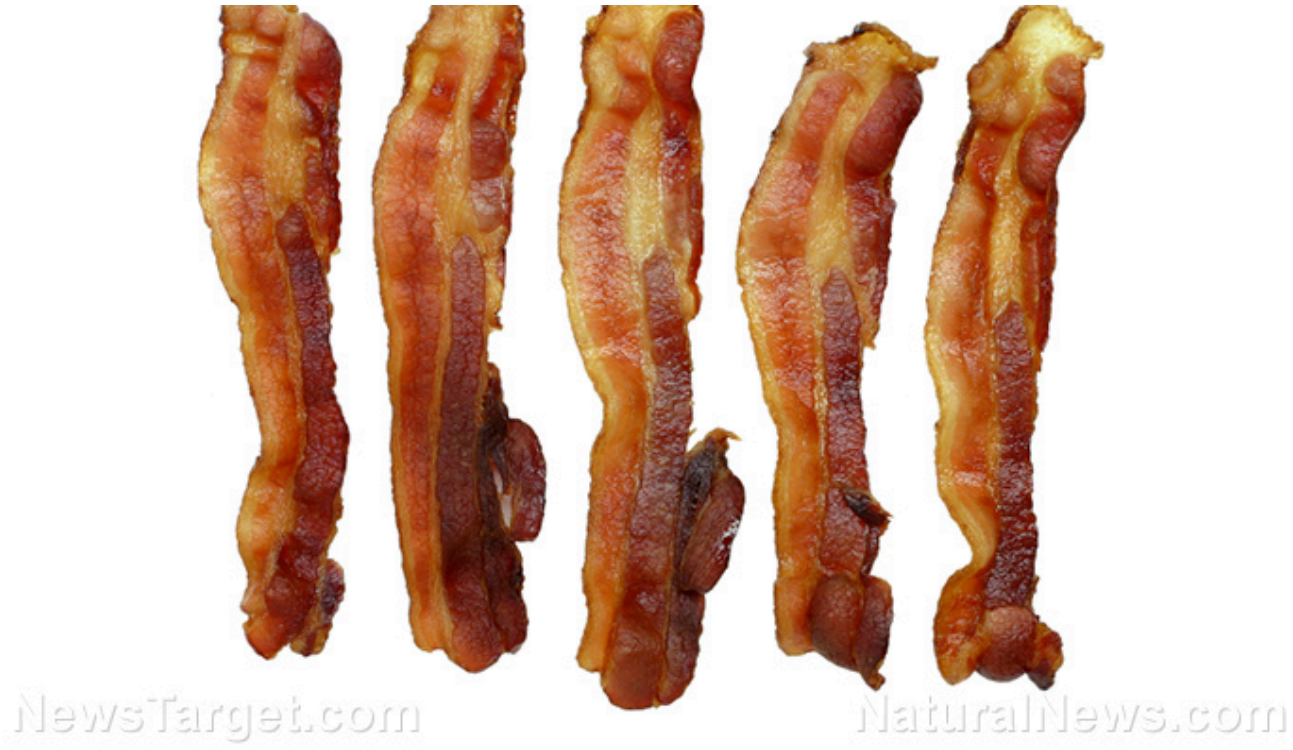

- A U.K. coalition led by Prof. Chris Elliott warns that nitrites in processed meats have contributed to 54,000 bowel cancer cases in the past decade, costing the NHS £3 billion in treatment.

- The WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified processed meats as Group 1 carcinogens (like tobacco and asbestos) in 2015, yet U.K. regulators have failed to act.

- Nitrites react in the stomach to form nitrosamines, potent carcinogens linked to 5,400 annual bowel cancer cases in the U.K. alone.

- The British *Food Standards Agency* (FSA) claims nitrites prevent botulism, but the coalition counters that nitrite-free bacon exists without any botulism outbreaks.

- 69 percent of Britons support banning nitrites and France has already moved to reduce nitrite levels by 20 percent, while the U.K. lags behind despite cross-party political backing.

A coalition of leading scientists, medical professionals and politicians is demanding an immediate ban on nitrites in supermarket bacon and ham, citing a devastating public health toll they link to over 54,000 bowel cancer cases in the United Kingdom over the past decade.

The newly-formed Coalition Against Nitrites led by prominent food safety expert, Professor Chris Elliott, represents a direct challenge to both government regulators and the food industry, arguing that the continued use of these chemicals constitutes a preventable crisis with a staggering human and financial cost. The current campaign is rooted in a pivotal scientific declaration made a decade ago.

In 2015, the *World Health Organization*'s International Agency for Research on Cancer classified processed meat as a Group 1 carcinogen. This classification places products like bacon and ham in the same category as tobacco and asbestos for their confirmed cancer-causing potential in humans. The scientists now assert that despite this stark warning, successive U.K. governments have done virtually nothing to reduce public exposure to the very chemicals implicated in the risk.

At the heart of the controversy are nitrites, chemical preservatives added to processed meats. Their primary function is to give bacon its characteristic pink color, enhance its savory flavor and significantly extend its shelf life. However, the coalition argues this convenience comes at a grave cost.

When consumed, nitrites can react with other compounds in the stomach to form nitrosamines. These nitrosamines are potent carcinogens, substances directly known to cause cancer. The scientific consensus, they argue, points to this process as a key driver behind the elevated bowel cancer risk associated with regular consumption of processed meats.

"Bacon is high in saturated fat and sodium," said *BrightU.AI*'s Enoch engine. "It also contains nitrites, which can form cancer-causing nitrosamines in the body. Furthermore, processing inconsistencies mean people cannot always be sure the product meets safety standards."

The coalition's analysis presents a sobering assessment of the consequences of inaction. They estimate that approximately 5,400 bowel cancer cases diagnosed each year in the U.K. are directly attributable to eating processed meats containing nitrites.

Beyond the profound human suffering, this has placed an immense burden on the National Health Service. Over the last ten years, the coalition calculates that the British *National Health Service* has footed a bill of roughly £3 billion ($3.98 billion) to treat these preventable cancers, with the average treatment cost per patient averaging £59,000.

The fight for nitrite-free meats

But the coalition's stance places it in direct opposition to the official position of the British *Food Standards Agency* (FSA). The FSA maintains that nitrites are "essential" for food safety, specifically to prevent the growth of deadly bacteria like *Clostridium botulinum*, which causes botulism.

The coalition fiercely contests this argument, pointing to the existence of nitrite-free products and the complete absence of any recorded cases of botulism linked to them as proof that the safety justification is outdated. A leaked industry report from 2019 is also cited as evidence that nitrites may not offer the protection against bacteria that regulators claim.

The call for a ban has garnered significant cross-party political support, uniting members from seven different U.K. political parties. Lord James Bethell, a former Conservative health minister, has publicly backed the campaign, emphasizing the urgent need for a preventative health strategy. He noted that colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the U.K., with about 120 new cases diagnosed every single day.

This political momentum is mirrored by public opinion, with recent polling indicating that 69 percent of Britons support the removal of nitrites from their food. The campaign is not isolated to the U.K., crossing over to the English channel.

In France, a similar movement has already prompted government action, resulting in an official plan to immediately reduce nitrite levels in deli meats by approximately 20 percent. The French health agency has confirmed the direct link between nitrites in ham and colorectal cancer, lending further weight to the coalition's arguments. This contrast highlights a growing regulatory divergence, with the European Union moving to tighten its rules on nitrite use while the UK lags behind.

Despite the availability of alternatives, the coalition acknowledges the scale of the challenge. Over 90 percent of the European processed meat market is still dominated by products

containing nitrites. Changing this will require a concerted effort from regulators, producers and retailers.

The coalition's members argue that with modern food technologies, it is entirely feasible to produce the bacon consumers love with the same taste, appearance and cost – but without the carcinogenic chemicals. The group has vowed to maintain pressure on the government until its mission is achieved. But for the millions who enjoy a traditional breakfast, the outcome of this clash between science, industry and regulation will have profound implications for the future of the food on their plates.

Watch this video explaining that people give themselves cancer every day with unhealthy and toxic lifestyle choices.

This video is from the BrightU Series Snippets channel on *Brighteon.com*.

Sources include:

DailyMail.com

NewFoodMagazine.com

BrightU.ai

Brighteon.com

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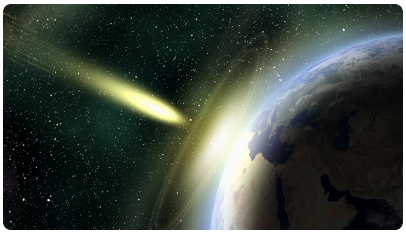

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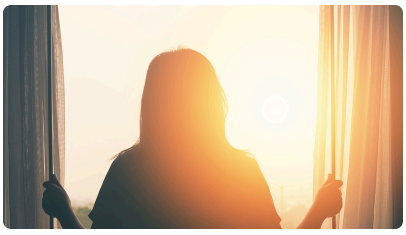

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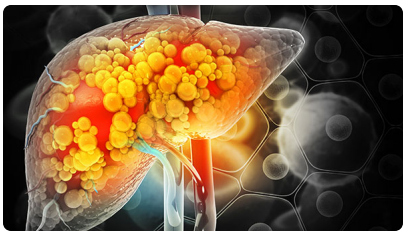

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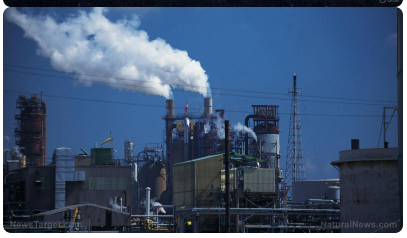

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